

THE WAY OF THE SOUTH

IN BOTH practical studies and theoretical implications, as we have indicated their range and nature, the total of the Southern Regional Study envisaged a better balanced regional America in which there would no longer exist the narrow sectionalisms of "America's Tragedy." The old terms "North" and "South," "East" and "West," as conflicting sections would be transcended by the logical development of well balanced regions; the Southeast and the Southwest would be no more "sectional" or isolated than would the Northeast and the Northwest or the Middle States and the Far West. Thus, one of the most important contributions of the Southern Regional Study was the clear delineation of the South into its Southeast and Southwest.

As summarized in *Southern Regions of the United States*,¹ it was pointed out that there was no longer in the United States any single entity which might be designated as "the South." More authentically, there was a Southeast and a Southwest, comparable to four other major regions designated as the Northeast, the Northwest, the Middle States, and the Far West. The old custom of massing together, for aggregate quantitative effects, a large group of "southern" States, including Missouri, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Texas, and the specialized urban District of Columbia, was not only inaccurate but detrimental to genuine regional analysis and planning.

It was, therefore, neither possible nor desirable to present a single authentic picture of "the South" any more than it is of "the North" or "the East" or "the West," not only because of the magnitude and diversity of the regions but also because of the dynamics of the emerging southwestern region, comprising Texas, Oklahoma, New

Mexico, and Arizona, which would require separate analysis and interpretation no less critical and comprehensive than that for the Southeast.

One of the major contributions of the study was the working hypothesis of the relatively clear-cut differentiation between the older Southeast and the emerging Southwest, a new empire in itself. Inherent also in both content and methodology was the definitive sixfold regional division of the United States. A part of the value of this regional division was to be found in the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of these six divisions for the particular purpose of the Southern Regional Study. It was hoped, however, that this arrangement might contribute something toward a more uniform basis for regional study and planning and for experimentation with many sub-regional divisions for further exploration and planning.

The sixfold division basic to the study was evolved from a study of a large number of regional classifications and from many hypothetical groupings tested from various angles. It was, therefore, the most satisfactory arrangement that could be worked out. Allocation of States was made on the basis of the clustering of elemental indices, of which some seven hundred constituted the field of analysis. In addition to the *Southeast* and the new *Southwest*, the *Northeast*, approximating Frederick Jackson Turner's "Greater New England," included Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia. The *Middle States*, approximating the earlier "Old Northwest" and the "Middle West," included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri. The *Northwest* included North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah; and the *Far*

¹ Howard W. Odum, *Southern Regions of the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 5-9.

West added Nevada to the Pacific Coast States of Washington, Oregon, and California.

It is important to indicate here, however, something of the method by which the Southwest was differentiated from the Southeast and the Southeast redefined to exclude Maryland and Missouri. Basic to any reasonable effort to attain effective regional analysis of "the South" was the first task of delimitation and definition. What were the limits within which valid differentials could be measured and what the limits of desirable homogeneity for the purposes of analysis and planning? The first task within this assignment was to appraise the traditional "South" as a premise for such analysis. This broad grouping generally comprised seventeen or eighteen States including from the Northeast, Maryland, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and sometimes Delaware; from the Middle States, Missouri; and in the Southwest, Oklahoma and Texas. The first task in the examination of this older and larger regional hypothesis was to seek measures of homogeneity and differentials when compared with the "border" States and adjoining regions and with the national averages.

The second task was to appraise the general historical and cultural factors which might apply to such groupings and to gauge the practicability of encompassing so large a part of the Nation in any workable techniques either of study or of planning. Tested by both of these criteria it was clear that so large and traditional a "South" was no longer a reality either in the spirit or the measure of the regions. First of all, Maryland qualified as "South" in no more than a score of a field of nearly 200 indices. And so to attempt to characterize or plan for Maryland as a region of farm tenancy or of Negro-white population or of illiteracy or of agrarian culture or of children per 1,000 women or of wealth and income or bank resources and savings or value of land and buildings or land use and industrial indices and a hundred other socio-economic factors, basic to needs and planning, was at once to invalidate the scientific validity of regional analysis. On the other hand, to add Maryland's aggregate to the Southeast in the effort to bolster up its claims and ratings would defeat the object of seeking workable differentials upon which to reach accurate diagnosis. Having rejected Maryland as a southern State, Delaware and the District of Columbia, being beyond and to the northeast, were no

longer considered hypothetically within the South. Missouri, following much the same process, showed only a score or more indices of homogeneity with the South than Maryland. By the same token, it was overwhelmingly not "southern," except in certain parts of the State and in certain historical, legislative, and institutional affiliations, all of which, however, no longer appear valid as definitive characterizations.

Turning next to the western border States, Texas and Oklahoma qualify as "southern" in less than a third of the indices selected. As measured, therefore, both by a predominance of the selected indices and by general geographical, industrial, and cultural conditions, these States do not belong in the "South" of the Southeastern States. Having characterized Texas and Oklahoma as belonging to the Southwestern States, there remained the problem of classifying Louisiana and Arkansas, both west of the Mississippi, and often characterized as Southwest. Tested by the criteria, on the one hand, of the Southeast and, on the other, of Texas and Oklahoma, they qualify overwhelmingly with the Southeast and are differentiated from the emerging greater Southwest in a plurality of indices. In addition to this, they fall within the geographic bounds of practical homogeneity of culture and function. Thus the Southeastern Region of eleven States conforms to a dominance of characteristics which indicate a quite satisfactory general southern homogeneity.

This delineation of southern regions, therefore, symbolized again both the practical considerations involved in southern research and planning and the theoretical implications for the regional balance of America through the substitution of the new regionalism for the old sectionalism, and for a while it appeared as if we had succeeded. For during the 1920's and 1930's it was commonly assumed the terms "North" and "South" were no longer valid realities in the new America that was developing except as they reflected a tragic past which the Nation wanted to forget. The First World War had relegated the use of the term "The War," as referring to the Civil War, to an outmoded past that took its place alongside other epochs of "only yesterday" or that represented stepping stones of dead selves from which the Nation had already risen to higher things. And before that, perhaps during the whole of the first third of the twentieth century, there were mani-

fest very substantial trends toward a genuinely realistic reintegration of the South in the Nation as, in the regional balance of America, the southern States assumed increasingly higher standards of achievement and a larger degree of participation and fellowship in the total American culture. The "South," as Southeast and Southwest, was taking its place dynamically in the Nation, even as the Far West, the Northwest, and all the other regions were making America strong and united by developing their own diversity of strength and seeking a new economic and cultural balance of America.

There were several reasons for these important trends, perhaps about equally balanced between the regions and the Nation as a whole. In the case of the South its leaders had inventoried her resources and her deficiencies and had begun a realistic facing of facts basic to genuine progress. In the North a new school of historians had rewritten the history of the Nation and had presented the South in fair appraisal and had also made realistic diagnosis and criticism of the northern post-Civil War administration. The South had also made extraordinary strides in nearly all phases of its culture and economy. It had built industry, developed great highways, increased its urban civilization in both the Southeast and the Southwest, faster than any other regions, had pioneered in some aspects of public welfare, public health and education, and had, with the cooperation and support of the Northeast, strengthened its colleges and universities, and especially a number of important institutions. It had begun to develop research in both the physical and social sciences and to apply the results to agriculture and industry, and it was increasingly being represented in the national councils of leadership. It had assumed a new sort of leadership in literature, and the South had become the best documented of all the regions at the same time that this was made possible by an extraordinary liberal cooperation of publishers and educational leaders and philanthropists in the Northeast. And there was pride of achievement not only in the South but in the other regions, particularly in "the wests," for what the southern regions were doing.

All this was especially marked from the period immediately following the First World War, from 1918 through to the early depression years. Then, once again, both the Southeast and the Southwest assumed increasingly larger and more positive

participation in the affairs of the Nation as the democratic administration developed the New Deal. This was true in two main ways. One was the natural and logical larger ratio of southern participation in the actual Federal Government in a democratic administration. The other was in the South's participation in the measures of relief and reconstruction during the depression years when the South was sometimes "worse off" than other parts of the Nation. At any rate, the southern States put their hands to the task, and through State planning boards, through various technical ways of cooperating with New Deal agencies, through public works, work relief, agricultural adjustment, through educational cooperation, and other ways were assuming a new sort of normal and logical participation in the total national effort. Southern personnel, both in political and in appointive arrangements, was large.

Then a strange thing happened. And it happened twice, once due to the depression New Deal pressure and once due to the pressure of war, namely, a sudden revivification of the old sectional conflict and the recrudescence of the terms "North" and "South." It would have been unbelievable, if it had not actually happened, that this together with special and intensified revival of the old race conflict would bring the South to its greatest crisis and the Nation again to one of its chief domestic dilemmas since the Civil War. This dilemma, even as the promising trends of the earlier period, found its genesis about equally in the mutual relationships and action of North and South.

First, as a result of the realistic researches in the South diagnosing its resources, deficiencies, and needs, and then as a result of the New Deal administration, the Nation so rediscovered the South as to set a mark, first of backwardness and later of badness upon a region, and to undertake to remake it overnight. The revival of the term "The South," in so far as the national administration was concerned and in so far as it began to be universally used by editors and critics, came about in two ways. One was typified in the now noted slogan that the South was the Nation's Economic Problem Number One. The South was Tobacco Road. It was again missionary territory. But, whatever it was, it was "The South." In the second place, "The South" came to be synonymous with conservatism or reactionary policies due to the

opposition of southern senators and congressmen and of State governors and leaders to many of the New Deal policies. "What else could you expect, he is a Southerner?" came to be a common refrain. And then "The South," with its usual sensitiveness and defense resentfulness revived with a vengeance the term "The North" which was again "trying to make the South over."

And even more than the depression New Deal, the coming of the war which was expected to bring unity to the Nation and in which the southern States led in enlistment and in all-out support, brought about the second intensification of the North-South conflict, due, of course, to the South's racial segregation, culture, and laws. The Nation realized suddenly that its ideas of the American Dream guaranteed to all its citizens equal rights and opportunities, and that, while it had gone to war for global democracy, it had in two of its own great regions a negation of such democracy. And it realized suddenly that this limitation of democracy and this segregation policy applied to the armed forces and that, being a white man's world, and the Army and Navy and Air Corps being a part of that world, the Negro in America was disgracefully discriminated against through no fault of his own. And so there was the ever-recurring question, "What can be done about the South?" And there were increasingly articulate individuals and agencies, private and public, setting themselves to the task of "making" the South change. The net result has been an unbelievable revival of the bitterness implied in the old "North" and "South" what time the South resents what it calls northern interference and what time the North tries to coerce the South again.

Then there is another factor. There may be no new South nor new North in these conflicting areas, but there is a new Negro of great force and vitality which makes compromise well-nigh impossible. The Negro himself had changed tremendously. It was not only that he had developed an important upper and middle class; it was not only that he had developed a magnificent leadership and thousands had received higher educational opportunities. It was not only that Negro youth, sensing the epochal spiritual change and racial attitudes and led by Negro leadership of the North and South, was minded to experiment with every type of equal opportunity—it was all this and more. It was as if some universal

message had come through to the great mass of Negroes, urging them to dream new dreams and to protest against the old order. It was as if there were pathos and tragedy in their misunderstanding of the main tenets of a bitter Negro leadership, and as if many of the northern Negro leaders of limited mentality had confused them with the idea that any sort of work or courtesy or cheerfulness was an index of subservience to the white man. In all of this, whether it was pathos and tragedy or admirable idealism and noble effort, the net result was a new Negro facing the old white man and joining with "The North" against "The South."

The Southern Regional Study as interpreted in *Southern Regions of the United States* had envisaged its functions primarily in terms of southern regional development but always featured as integrated into the national picture and as portraying in a scientific way the realistic culture analysis of the South. Its objectives and findings were stated in some two hundred paragraphs, among which the following need to be recalled here in order that subsequently we may characterize the cultural "Way of the South."²

The first objective of the Southern Regional Study was to present an adequate picture, partial but representative, of the southern regions of the United States in fair perspective to time-quality, to geographic factors, and to the cultural equipment and behavior of the people.

It was desired further to present this picture in such ways as to indicate the place of these regions in the Nation and to explain something of the dramatic struggle of a large and powerful segment of the American people for mastery over an environment capable of producing a superior civilization, yet so conditioned by complexity of culture and cumulative handicaps as to make the nature of future development problematical.

Over and above any conventional social inventory, it was important to point toward greater realization of the inherent capacities of the southern regions; and to indicate ways and means of bridging the chasm between the superabundance of physical and human resources as potentialities and the actualities of technical deficiencies in their development and waste in their use.

It was equally important to point toward a continuously more effective reintegration of the southern regions into the national picture and

² *Ibid.*, p. 1-3.

thereby toward a larger regional contribution to national culture and unity. To this end, it was important to make available and to reinterpret to special groups and to the public in general, within and without the regions, and in as many ways as possible, the facts basic to the understanding of the situation and to the planning of next steps.

Partly as purpose and method and partly due to the recognition of the extraordinary difficulty and importance of these tasks, it was desired to project the study upon a theoretical framework which would insure measurable reality in research and attainability in whatever programs might emerge. Such reality was, of course, manifold. It would comprehend not only measurement, but perspective and interpretation; not only the general picture of aggregates and averages, but the specific facts of distribution and such detailed analysis as would focus upon critical problems toward which continued research might be directed.

Basic to such a framework was a clear recognition of the historical and theoretical significance of the region and of the power of the folk-regional society in modern culture, as well as the very practical problem in the United States of what divisions of the Nation might meet the largest number of requirements for general regional analysis and planning and what other special regions and subregions might be effective for more specific purposes.

More specifically, such a theoretical framework aimed to give reality to the southern picture. This reality, again, was of many kinds. A part was the facing of absolute facts rather than substituting rationalizations which grew out of irrelevant comparisons or defense explanations of how things had come to be as they were. Yet another form of reality was to be found in the measurement of conditions in terms of comparison with certain selected standards and with regional and national variations. Yet, still again, a part of the reality was to be found in the clear recognition that mere comparisons with national averages or aggregates were valid only within the bounds of their particular limitations and definitions, the problem and methodology of evaluating such comparisons and differentials being a part of the task. Furthermore, the greatest measure of reality could be found in the balanced picture of basic facts rather than, and largely exclusive of, vivid extremes.

Again, such a theoretical framework aimed to

be practically comprehensive enough to insure a fair picture of the major resources and forces which have determined and will determine the capacity of the southern regions. In terms of "wealth," they were natural wealth, technological wealth, artificial wealth, human wealth, and institutional wealth. In terms of a larger twofold measure, there would be, first, an inventory of natural resources together with the visible ends of technological mastery in human use aspects and in the resulting artificial wealth of the regions; and, second, an appraisal of human resources together with the visualized ends of social achievement in the development of a richer culture and social well-being.

One of the special premises of the study was reflected in the past constricting power of sectionalism in contrast to the current motivation of substituting the new regionalism for the old sectionalism in American life. Since sectional conditioning appeared more marked in the Southeast than elsewhere, the study was, therefore, projected to feature the regional-national as opposed to the local-sectional emphasis. Such a regional premise manifestly would avoid any hypotheses of a self-contained or self-sufficing South and would stimulate a greater degree of Federal interest and participation on the part of the South.

It was understood that many of the dominant forces of the regions, such as tradition, opinion, conflict, arrangements of local stateways and folkways, which constitute a part of the picture, were not measurable in terms of units that can be counted. On this assumption a part of the reality of the picture was inherent in the need and capacity for such authentic interpretation of the South's background as will give "the dignity of cultural history" to its chronological lag, its retarded frontier dominance, its agrarian culture, its youthful and immature population, its lusty vitality, its unevenness of life, and its marginal struggle for survival.

The study sought, further, to explore the southern regions as a laboratory for regional research and for experimentation in social planning. Of special importance might be the regional testing field for adjustment between industry and agriculture as the basic economic goal of government, and for the more general objective of reintegrating agrarian culture in the national picture. Again, the study was projected as a regional approach to the new demography which in both method and

content might contribute largely to the revitalized study of the people and their institutions. Such a study of contemporary civilization would recognize certain values inherent in logical differentials which abound in the regions. Manifestly, such a theoretical framework must assume a less provincial and a more objective, long-time view of the South than had commonly obtained, and a more generous patience with the realities of societal evolution on the part of all those who seek reform and reconstruction.

Ten years after the publication of *Southern Regions*, in the light of continued study and observation, of planning and exploring ways and means for regional development, the hazards of a return to the older sectionalism, as indicated in the early 1930's appear even more significant. And one basis for the threatened revivification of the old sectional conflict is found in the failure of both the South and the Nation to understand and to coöperate with each other as organic, integral units of American culture. The South is not something exotic in America, set apart as a phenomenon or to be set aside or transformed by edict or wish, no matter how right the ends may be. So much is that true that the story of the South often seems to reflect the most distinctive need of the Nation as one of realistic understanding of the South in terms of a cultural and sociological analysis of what the South is, why it came to be what it is, why it behaves as it does, what the rest of the people of the Nation think of it, how they came to so think about it, and why they behave as they do.

The story of the South, therefore, is first of all an American story. In the analysis and chronology of this story the way of the South is the way of Nature. It is the way of the frontier and country life, of the heritage of the American Indian and his treatment. It is the way of the folk, the way of religion, the way of race, the way of culture. It is, therefore, the way of America always abounding in problems to settle and ways to settle them. It is the way of history and its unerring annals of what happens and of what else happens. In these ways are reflected the story of the South's earlier years and growing up; in these ways are reflected its conditioning and folkways that continue to characterize its culture even up to now. And in the way of race and caste the biography of the South pulls away somewhat from the American pattern to reflect a distinctive cul-

ture which, isolated by its earlier sectionalism and by war, now constitutes the Nation's first problem of regional balance and national integration.

We may look briefly, therefore, at certain symbols and summaries of how the "Way of the South" is characterized by each of these elements of Nature and the frontier, of race and folk, of religion and politics, of culture and history; and is thus inseparably the way of America.

First of all, the Way of the South is the way of Nature and resources set in the American framework. This was true in several ways. It was not only true in the sense in which Ulrich Phillips had explained, but in even more profound ways. Phillips began his *Life and Labor in the Old South* by discussing the weather. For that, he thought, had been the "chief agency in making the South distinctive. It fostered the plantation system, which brought the importation of Negroes, which not only gave rise to chattel slavery but created a lasting race problem. These led to controversy and regional rivalry for power, which produced apprehensive reactions and culminated in a stroke for independence. Thus we have the house that Jack built, otherwise known for some years as 'The Confederate States of America.'"

Yet the total culture of the South and its place in the Nation is not so simply explained. There was Nature in the beginning and what it did to set the incidence of a distinctive regional culture. But there was also the powerful factor of what that culture would do with Nature and her resources. In the analysis, therefore, of all the factors involved, namely Nature's first contribution in climate and situation; Nature's total endowment in resources and laws; and Nature's use in the evolving culture of the people, will be found a realistic understanding of what is called in America "The South," and what in reality is primarily distinctive southern regions of American culture.

How true this is may be seen from the consideration that one of the best approaches to the understanding of a given society is a clear picture of all resources available for development and utilization by the people of that society. There are two sides of the picture. One has to do with the nature and range, the quality and quantity of resources, and the other with their conservation, development, and use. In human society use of resources is of greater significance than range and kind. Yet in human society total resources, including human resources, will always include such

factors as science, research, and planning for resource use and the social institutions through which the people work.

It is important, therefore, to emphasize the powerful rôle of Nature through natural resources, increasingly important in the modern world, but also the fact that natural resources exist, in so far as society is concerned, only as they relate to human and social resources. This is where the story of a culture comes to grips with the reality of a world in which natural and human wealth must find balance and equilibrium within the framework of each society and also in the inter-relationships between different societies in conflict. For the nature and use of resources is determined in the long run by the kind of society in which they are used; just as the use to which they are put determines the nature of the society of which they are the physical basis.

In order to see how this works in a particular culture, such as the southern regions of the United States, we may classify resources into five main categories. These are natural resources, technological resources, capital resources, human resources, and institutional resources. How these are all inseparably interwoven in the fabric of human society may be seen by noting that a society which discovers and develops technological resources such as science, invention, technology, organization, management adequately to translate its natural resources into capital wealth or money resources is enabled to apply its capital wealth in the development of its institutional resources and thereby enrich its people and insure their welfare.

Another way of classifying these same types of resources is to say that there are two main categories, namely, natural resources and human resources. In order for natural resources to be developed and utilized well there is needed the technological resources of research, science, invention. In order for human resources to be developed and utilized well there is needed the technological resources of the institutions and of management and organization. In the case of natural resources the result is capital wealth or money resources and in the case of human resources the result is institutional resources to be devoted to human welfare and happiness as ends to which all resources are merely means. This is why the biography of a people begins with nature and resources as inseparable organic parts of society itself.

All this means that there is something far more significant about nature than merely physical things. Nature and resources find scarcely half of their measure in the things of nature—air, water, soil, minerals. The power and glory of nature are in her laws and in the processes of growth and development and in her capacity to produce. Nature's laws and processes are synonymous not only with science itself but are basic to human nature and human society. In reality nature is of three sorts—the material things of earth; natural laws and processes; and then the human counterparts and social relationships of man *and* nature and of man *in* nature.

And finally, we must never lose sight of the fact that the supreme climax of nature is in the personality of the individual and in the folk-character of the people. The full understanding of this implies a recapturing of the fundamental meaning of the inner personality and individual differences of people wherever they aspire to be appreciated, recognized, loved, rewarded, praised, and wherever they revolt when they are not so appraised. This means that the rediscovery and esteem of the folk personality is a supreme task in any understanding of the natural history of a culture. This reflects the profound truth that the mere redistribution of resources and technology through standardized procedures isolated from the elements of folk life brings neither satisfaction to the people nor peace and democracy in the world. This explains also why the understanding and direction of a society must be found within the framework of its regional environment and the inherent cultural endowment of the folk.

And in the South the folk were Nature-folk longer than in the rest of the Nation. The mountains and rivers, the hunting and fishing, the weather working on man to give him the Nature character—all these were elemental factors. And men partook of the hard way of Nature. Sometimes they were prophets of doom, sometimes of the rainbow's end. Sometimes they loved the bark of dog or the low of cow more than the bloom of flower or the crop of corn. Sometimes they loved the sunset and mountaintop and sometimes they brooded in isolation.

Sometimes they loved the rippling, dreamily-drifting river and sometimes they cursed its muddy-watered floods. Sometimes they loved the whispering and murmuring of pine trees, and sometimes they cut and burned them to death. Storm clouds, high winds, cold frosts, wet grounds

vied with hot sun, parching winds, baked grounds and burning drought to mix the moods of the folk. There were rippling fields of oats, waving fields of wheat, tasseling tops of corn, white fleeced cotton fields, and there were horses and mules, cows and calves, hogs and chickens, hounds and cats, wild life and wild woods. And there were winter and summer, day and night, breakfast and dinner and supper. And the days went on with sickness and health and children a-borning and dying. The days were full and the folk were not so much interested in civilization as they were in culture and living in the way of Nature.

There is another way in which Nature and the American Indian were symbolic of the South that was to be and in which they had set the incidence for the southern regions of the United States. This was in the regional nature of the southern areas and cultures and the way in which sectionalism and regionalism were to fix the rôle of the South in the Nation. For whatever else the South might be, it constituted first one, and later two, of the major regions of a great Nation that was to find much of its strength in its diversity. And the total character and destiny of the Nation was to be forever conditioned by the part which the southern regions were to play in its growth and development. In the later story of the cultural and historical development of the South, this elemental regional nature of the South was to take the form of a powerful sectionalism. The story of this sectionalism is a part of the way of culture and history which we shall presently study. For the present we are interested primarily in the basic nature of that elemental regionalism in which America is so fundamentally bottomed. For it was in this that the youth-period of "The South" was nurtured.

In the oft-forgotten story of Appalachia that looks down to the sea was found the first incidence, not only of the South's physical heritage, but of the other great regions of America and the frontier influence in the culture of the New World. Here was an extraordinary and amazing new world of Nature and of men. Of Nature there were no less than seven continental divisions below a Canadian Superior Upland, each adequate for separate and distinctive empires, yet potentially seven great regions constituting one great continental unity. And of men, there could be symbolized no less than seven great culture areas, in each of which the basic modes of life and adaptation to Nature were sufficiently similar to afford

cultural homogeneity. These twin-settings of Nature and Man, on the one hand, as magnificent a picture as ever Nature provided, and, on the other, equally magnificent specimens of Nature's earth-men, constituted the New World of America, basic to the future development of the South and the Nation.

The southern members of the family of American regions grew up, like the rest of the early Nation, under the influence of their ever-changing boundaries and areas. In this influence of the frontier was to be found not only many of the forces which were to condition the culture of the South but the Nation as well. For there was a striking parallel between the early influence upon the Nation of such leaders as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and other statesmen of the aristocratic South and the influence of such frontier leaders as Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson, all leaders in the new frontier approaches to American democracy. For in these leaders there was foreshadowed much of the politics of personalities and much of the tropism of the people toward political expression that was to characterize the later South in many of its major political episodes.

The products, however, were not so organic or far-reaching as the total culture effects of the frontier on the enduring character of both the Southeast and the Southwest. For just as the early plantation South had set the incidence for a regional culture of aristocracy, race, and caste, so the opening of the new Southwest, stemming out from North Carolina, thence through what was to be Tennessee, set the stage for a sturdy folk democracy that was to influence not only that part of the South but would extend northwestward through old "Kaintuck" and on to "ole man river" north and later south and beyond into Texas and Oklahoma. In both great southern levels of early Americanism the chief mode of life was the open country, the expanding frontier, and an agrarian culture that set the patterns for southern life and institutions.

This influence of the frontier was, of course, of many sorts. In general there were two fundamental conditioned results of the frontier forces, one on the character of the culture and institutions of the people and one on the character of the people themselves, particularly their psychology of the individual and the folk. These make up the culture and behavior of a people and may be used as measures of any early civilization. This is true

of early American culture and its continuing traits, whether it be the folk culture of the mountain folk or of the plains dwellers or whether it apply to the product which was Walt Whitman, Nature, and Frontier Man personified; or the same would be true of the powerful folk cultures of the great open spaces of Russia, or of the product which was Tolstoy, unharassed spirit of Nature and the frontier.

The general influence of the frontier upon American culture has been appraised by Turner and others. Illustrations are numerous from the realistic study of the various frontiers of America or from the study of literature and the history of the various regions of America. When we come to apply this measure to the southern regions, it must be very clear that the task is almost synonymous with the cataloging of many of the main traits of southern culture. For here was a regional culture which featured strong individualism, great religious influences, strong sense of honor and personality, strong allegiance to the family and morals, quick tempers and emotional reactions, impatience with organization and formal law and control, love of freedom and the open spaces, and not too much emphasis upon finished standards of art, education, work. There were the frontier patterns of all earlier America as reflected in the homogeneity of native white, northern European stocks, Protestant church going, Sabbath observing, patriarchal folk, abounding in the spirit of honor fighting politics, liquor-drinking, and little love of the law.

So, too, the rural influence still constitutes a powerful factor in the individual lives and behavior of the southern people. Morning, noon, and night, spring, summer, and winter, the language of the weather becomes the language of the people. The farmer loses, wins, breaks even in his contests with rain and drouth, storm and flood, cold and heat. A sizable storm may destroy years of achievement. A year of drouth penalizes with high financial loss and personal dilemma. Blizzards and floods, weevils and worms, disease and hazard multiply their toll until the farmer's gamble becomes a part of his daily life.

For the frontier was not only powerful in its earlier character-forming influence upon the region, but conflict between frontier folkways and modern technological civilization has long been considered by those who study the psychological foundations of modern society as basic to the

understanding of much that characterizes pathological behavior. Dr. Franz Alexander in his *Our Age of Unreason* thought that Frederick Jackson Turner's writings "explained the most common conflict of the American neurotic, the thwarted ambition among people trained to admire individual achievements, as their ancestors had done in the days of the Open Frontier, yet situated in a standardized industrial civilization which imposed uneventful routine and offered no real security in return." One need not agree with this conclusion to sense, however, the essential importance of the way of the frontier in the total way of the South.

As if the South up to this point did not already have enough of the total elements that go into the architecture of all cultures, there were yet to be added the powerful factors of race and caste which were to make the region different from all other regions of the Nation. Alongside, therefore, the two great streams of southern development already under way there was to be a third, the three at floodtide converging into a powerful current of mixed waters to make the symbolic muddy river of southern culture. For paralleling the plantation aristocracy was the ever-widening and swift moving stream of slavery, growing larger from the springs of population increase and the tributaries of economic and sectional conflict. And in the uttermost parts of the South was the other widening stream of migration of white groups and their varied ethnic heritage to mix and mingle with the other two.

For the source of this new stream we return, then, to our first introduction to the powerful rôle of Nature in the development of the South, namely, the influence of weather upon crops, the place of cotton among southern crops and consequently the rôle played by Negro slavery in the cotton crop and its economy and culture. For in the coming of the Negro into the picture as a slave there were introduced at once not only the factor of race but a double basis of caste, one of blood and one of sex. In the first place, before the Negro came later to be the most powerful conditioning factor in postbellum southern culture through race and sex-caste, the plantation aristocracy had already evolved into such class and caste that the distinctions between the planter aristocracy at its highest level and the white South at its lowest level had formed an almost unbridgeable chasm between the two in so far as

intermarriage was concerned. That cast culture had left its inevitable weakening influence upon the upper brackets of the white South and its embittered heritage upon the rest of the white South. Then, later the organic heart of the South's bi-racial dilemma was to be found in the essential race-sex caste nature of the Negro problem, which rendered its dilemmas unsusceptible to the usual modes of adjustment. The understanding of these factors is essential to any appraisal of the way of the South as it matured into later years.

If in the story of the Negro and the South is reflected the most distinctive trait of the culture of the white South, commonly synonymous with the whole South, this trait is doubly reinforced by the universal heritage of folk culture more powerful and enduring than all the stateways of civilization. For the way of the South has been and is the way of the folk, symbolic of what the people feel, think, and do as conditioned by their cultural heritage and the land which Nature has given them. The culture of the South is the culture of the folk often in contradistinction to the civilization at its flood tide of urbanism, technology, intellectualism, and totalitarianism. This folk culture is deeply bottomed in the realities of Nature and the frontier struggle, in the heritage of multiple migrant people, in the rise and fall of an upper-folk aristocracy, and in a later powerful race and regional conflict. This is an elemental reality definitive of most of the South's culture and economy. The folk society of the South is well-nigh all-inclusive and is reflected on many levels of time and class and in the organic nature of the folk-regional society as definitive of how all societies are formed and grow up.

The elementary sources of this powerful folk society are reflected in a fourfold heritage. There was the growing up of the earlier frontier folk in their struggles with Nature and the Indian alongside the earlier folk culture which was of the vintage of Virginia and the planter aristocracy. Then for a time nearly all of the South consisted of the rural folk with their rugged individualism and their struggle with land and climate, with victory or defeat or harvest time in their blood. And there were the remnants of frontier folk symbolic of mountain culture or flatwood frustration or swamp and bayou levels of living in the out of way places throughout the Deep South. And finally there was the powerful folk society of

the Negroes themselves as both apart from and a part of the dominant white folk.

The first fruits of this heritage were easily discernible in four levels of folk culture which clearly accounted for the institutions and behavior of all the southern people in their considerable diversity, yet in such essential unity as to be characterized as the South. More accurately the southern folk society was a variegated fabric made from a fourfold pattern: the upper levels of the plantation aristocracy; the upper levels of the middle white South; the lower levels of the disadvantaged whites; and the Negro folk society itself reflecting three levels. One of these three was the folk society of the slave level distinguished in any story of universal culture and exerting a powerful influence upon the institutions and behavior of the white South. Another was the white-Negro folk society after freedom, a dual culture that always distinguished the South from the rest of the country and symbolized folk beliefs for which men were willing to die. The third was the new Negro folk society separate from and within the State society of the white South. This, again, was a magnificent example of folk culture in the making and showing remarkable vigor and power of survival, because it was of the essence of the folk.

In reality the vigorous and lusty South that was growing up in the way of Nature and the frontier, of race and the folk, could be understood only through a knowledge of the way of all culture as it develops from the earlier folk stages on through various maturing levels until it flowers in civilization. For this thing we call culture is the heart of human society and is the sum total of all the processes and products of a given people and their society at any given time and region in which they grow up and expand into wider areas and more complex relationships. Culture does not grow up overnight, neither is it changed in the twinkling of an eye. As the supreme character of human society, culture is not only what men die for, but is the product of all that for which they have lived and died, constituting also, therefore, the rich heritage of the past. Culture, moreover, is of and by all the groups, wherever found, whether dominating or not, so that the total culture of a people is interwoven into a fabric made up of variegated parts. The historian has come to recognize the fact that too often the variegated threads of folk culture have been neg-

lected in the attempt to document and to describe society of the past.

For culture is the rich process of living and experience even more than the recorded product. The intensity and quality of culture, like a man's character and personality, dominate life and behavior and make up the very essence and drama of living society. It might very well be the Santayana "public experience . . . the stars, the seasons, the swarm of animals, the spectacle of birth and death, of cities and wars . . . the facts before every man's eyes." Many of these the documentary historian cannot see. Nor does he always get the Carl Sandburg sensing that

The people is every man, everybody,
Everybody is you and me and all others.
What everybody says is what we all say.

And applied further, what everybody feels is what we all feel and what everybody does is what we all do. What we all do reflects the individual and group behavior which is culture.

All of this is of the greatest importance in the understanding of the South, its varied folk societies, its character and personality, and its institutional modes of behavior. For, within the four-fold pattern of southern folk culture there had grown up strong institutions, deeply bottomed in the culture of the old aristocratic South, the old frontier South, and the later South of the upper and lower brackets of white folk strongly conditioned by the black South of cultural tradition and of postwar change. This culture of the South was of the nature of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which changeth not in so far as it constituted the basic fabric upon which the South and the Nation were part and parcel of the same great American culture.

In the biography of a region the more intimate observations and explanation of the folk culture help us, in the words of Carl Sandburg, to sense "the feel and atmosphere, the layout and the lingo of the region, of breeds of men, of customs and slogans, in a manner and air not given in regular history." Yet to sense the stream flow of events, there is needed not only the cultural approach to history, but also and finally the historian's account of what has gone into the making of each regional culture and by the same token of the total national culture fabricated of all. Even though, in the past, much of our history may have been deficient in the first-hand knowledge of people and regions, more recent history, often

vividly and brilliantly written, with adequate documentation of the scholar, not only beckons to those who would know more but provides the authentic formal picture of the folk cultural backgrounds so essential to understanding.

The life of the South has been rich in experiences and episodes about which have centered great emotion and differences of opinion. Yet about the main facts of its birth and its growing up there can be no doubt. For here history has recorded the dates and many of the circumstances, so that, like the universal cultural evolution of the region, its history constitutes the essential reality which makes the way of the South the way of history. It might have been different under different circumstances. The South might have chosen to make it different. The Nation, were it all to do over again, even as the South, would never introduce slavery. Yet that which is written is written and the way of the South is the way of history. That which was done was done and cannot now be changed, and the understanding of what was done is essential to the understanding of the South and the Nation. There is needed, moreover, knowledge not only of whether this or that event happened, whether these or other facts were true, but also what else happened and what else was true in the total historical record. Most of the history of the South is no more nor less logical than the history of the rest of the Nation; it has simply been revived and interpreted in such partial and partisan manner as to make it appear a thing apart.

And now finally, as we look at the "Way of the South" as it has been reflected in the backgrounds and heritage of its early formative periods, it is increasingly clear that the "Way of the South" has been, is now, and must always be the "Way of America." We have already illustrated how this was true in the historical and cultural backgrounds. It must be clear that there was tragedy and failure in the one instance where, in the attempted secession, the way of the South was not the way of America. The tragedy was of, for, and by the Nation as well as the South. It must be clear in the new southern crisis and the national dilemma that the way of the South, more than ever before, must needs be the way of America, which America, of course, the South will help remake and strengthen. This means that there can be no enduring reality of the southern regions of the United States, except as they are component parts of the better balanced and integrated Nation.